



Department of  
**Environment and Conservation**

*Our environment, our future*



**SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT  
THREATENED SPECIES OR COMMUNITY RECOVERY TEAM**

**PROGRAM INFORMATION**

<b>Recovery Team name</b>	Western Ringtail Possum Recovery Team	
<b>Reporting Period (Financial/Calendar Year)</b>	Calendar year 2008	
<b>Current membership</b>		
	<b>Member</b>	<b>Representing</b>
1. Chair	Kim Williams	DEC SW Region
2. EXEC OFFICER	Jennifer Harrison (part)	DEC SW Region
3.	Absent	DEC SW Wildlife Officer
4.	John Carter	DEC Blackwood District
5.	Peter Orell	DEC Species and Communities Branch
6.	Keith Morris	DEC Science Division
7.	Paul De Tores	DEC Science Division
8.	Adrian Wayne	DEC Science Division
9.	Dave Mitchell	DEC Swan Region
10.	Brad Barton	DEC Warren Region
11.	Peter Collins	DEC South Coast Region
12.	Beth Hastie	FAWNA
13.	Will Oldfield	Shire of Busselton
14.	Kris Warren	Murdoch Uni Vet School

15.	Barbara Jones	WRP Researcher
<b>Dates meetings were held</b>	Last meeting held late Nov 2007. Under direction from the Director of NC further meetings of the team were postponed whilst effort was directed to immediate high priority WRP actions.	
<b>One to two paragraph summary of achievements suitable for WATSNU</b>	<p>Work progressed towards the completion of the Busselton Ringtail Habitat Review, Maintained effort assessing and trying to minimise habitat lost from development processes, Updated guidelines for Developers and Planning Consultants were produced. Worked with DEWHA and key proponents to find ways to identify and implement offset and approval conditions, attempted to enhance working relationships with wildlife carers groups dealing with WRPs</p> <p>Research into various aspects of translocation continues via two PhD students.</p>	
<b>List of actions undertaken by Recovery Team (from actions in Recovery Plan)</b>	Progress on rewriting the draft recovery plan halted whilst attention was directed to higher priority WRP actions.	
<b>Action 1 – Habitat Review</b>	<p>A draft document for comment and review was produced in late 2008. The paper recognises critical information gaps that need to be filled prior to release: a) detailed floristic and structural attributes of representative samples of key habitat types, b) incorporate the outcomes of investigations into the genetic structure and composition of the WRP population, c) development of conceptual local scale ecological habitat linkages model for the Bunbury to Dunsborough area.</p> <p>B is/was due to be completed in Feb 2009, A contract will be called to address A &amp; C in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2009 subject to available funding.</p>	
<b>Action 2 – Protect Habitat - Planning Guidelines</b>	A completely revised Development Planning Guidelines for Western Ringtail Possums in the Busselton and Dunsborough Areas document was produced and distributed to planning authorities and environmental consultants during 2008. The guidelines enable proponents to assess the impact that their development proposal may have on WRP and provide a process to identify and build strategies into the development proposal that should minimise these impacts.	
<b>Action 3 – Protect Habitat – Development applications</b>	Formal advice and liaison was provided on approx 60 development applications in the Bunbury to Dunsborough area which had the potential to impact on habitat.	
<b>Action 4 - Research</b>	Two PhD students are nearing completion of their studies: Judy Clarke has completed evaluating a range of factors potentially contributing the success/failure of translocations at 2 release sites – Leschenault Peninsula Conservation Park, Yalgorup NP. Although not final her results show health and disease issues are minimal, habitat quality influences WRP survival both short and long term, as does competition with Brush Tail Possums. Her work confirms that the main impact on survival is predation. Helen McCutcheon's field investigations into the health of captive and wild possums populations will be completed in 2009.	
<b>Action 5 - Population</b>	Using NRM funds a data collation and gap analysis for WRP	

<b>Monitoring</b>	distribution in the Warren Region was completed. An existing Spotlight and Scats based monitoring system was expanded and new occurrences recorded.
<b>Action 6</b>	